International Journal of Applied Research

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User education and importance of libraries in the colleges of Arambagh and Chandannagar sub-divisions: A study

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Abstract
A College Library supports its stakeholders in fulfilling the academic goal. User education is a need for making them know about the resources and services of the Library and how to get the best out of it by optimum utilization of the resources independently and effectively. The present study attempts to find out whether the users of the College Libraries can use Libraries independently and effectively and whether they are given User education for the purpose. Five College Libraries out of Thirteen Degree College Libraries under the University of Burdwan situated in the two subdivisions- Arambagh and Chandannagar in Hooghly district, West Bengal, are taken as the sample and, data are collected from their librarians/staff and the users present in the Libraries (students, teachers and, staff) using two sets of questionnaires by the personal visits with 94% return. Finally, the study shows that, if User Education can be arranged in a regular mode it may increase and ensure the use of the Library resources effectively and efficiently.

Keywords: Academic libraries, college libraries, user study, user education, library orientation

1. Introduction
The completion of their projects, The importance of Libraries in Academic Institutions in general and in higher studies in the particular is felt everywhere on the Globe. College Libraries, in this context, play the role to a great extent in helping and, supporting their parent body, i.e., the College itself, to fulfill the objective of imparting education and knowledge and to carry out educational programmes and curriculum of the Colleges. The Colleges indispensably depend on their respective College Libraries to satisfy the needs and requirements of Students, Teachers and, Staff towards reading, study and, research.
Libraries provide User Education by educating Library users
* About the resources of the Library, i.e., books, non-book materials, e-resources, etc.
* How to utilize those resources optimum independently, efficiently and, effectively.

Now a day's User Education is a basic need of any Library and a basic service on the part of the Libraries indeed. It is a prime issue now and the modern educational system also emphasizes the need for User Education in Libraries due to many reasons:
* The number of students increased in all the Colleges;
* Teachers are insufficient;
* Methodologies of teaching and learning have been changed a lot in higher studies
* It have necessitated the use of libraries by Students for assignments, etc.

College Libraries should provide User Education through the arrangement of Library Orientation Programme, constituted of the steps like- orientation, initiation and, bibliographic instruction. Orientation means introducing the users to the general techniques of library usage and services available in the library and in particular the organization, services and, layout of one particular library. Initiation means helping the users to overcome the difficulties when they begin to make use of the library. Bibliographic instruction is a continuous process in User Education and it helps the users to locate the right information in the right resource at right time, that is to say, the users are made efficient to utilize resources of the Library independently and effectively.

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2. Literature review

Very many studies have been done on the necessity of User Education in Academic Libraries. The term 'user education, user initiation', 'user assistance', 'user instruction' are often used interchangeably. But these terms are not actually of the same meaning. While orientation or assistance is meant for new readers, user education is meant for new as well as existing and potential users of the library. Educating library's clientele in the use of books and other materials is called User education. Mews has defined it as "instruction given to readers to help them to make the best use of library". Nawarathne and Ajay Pratap also wanted to show the necessity of user education and proved the indispensability of user education through an information literacy programme conducted by the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. Carla and Gabriella have pointed to the methods to be adopted to make an orientation programme a success, i.e., walk-through tour, self-guided tour, audio-visual tour, etc. Specialized methods are also indicated in the study. Carolyn suggested outlines for basic Library instruction. An academic environment to be considered, library instruction programme materials are to be planned and prepared so that at the first meeting the users get interested. Krishan Kumar has suggested some methods to be applied for User Education, such as Classroom lectures, seminars, practical exercises audio-visual mode of instructions, etc. User education can be offered in many ways but Senthur Murugan examines the need for user education and suggested for implementation of these programmes through the ICT and web-based user education in academic libraries. Nancy stated that a library's performance is measured through the quality of holding, the quantity of use and, the value of information, i.e., how the information obtained from the library is used by the users.

3. Objective of the study

The objective of the study is-
- To check whether the College Libraries are imparting User Education to their users;
- To check the use of the libraries;
- To find out whether the users can use the library effectively and efficiently.

4. Scope and coverage of the study

There are 13 general Degree College Libraries under the University of Burdwan, situated in Arambagh and Chandannagar Sub-divisions, Hooghly District, West Bengal. Only 5 College Libraries out of these 13 college libraries are taken as the sample where the study is made.

5. Statement of the problem

The Research problem is to find out if the users are independent in using available resources of their College Libraries effectively and efficiently after having User Education arranged by the Libraries.

6. Significance of the study

Research works are being carried on user education in academic libraries showing successful results in the ventures to educate users in the effective and efficient use of library resources. Another aspect of user education which are the focus of future planning is evaluation. This study is mainly intended to show that there is a need to start compulsory user education for users of libraries not only of the academic institutions but of other types of libraries too, i.e. public and special libraries. It would be good for the academic institutions to integrate the user education programme into the academic curriculum and get grades or marks allocated for library assignments.

7. Research questions

The Research questions that arise for this study are
- The Collections, Management of the Collections, ICT infrastructure, Services available in the Degree Colleges under the covered area;
- If the College Libraries render User Education to their users;
- Whether the users are independent in using their respective libraries efficiently and effectively.

8. Methodology

A survey research design is considered justified for the study as it describes conditions as they exist naturally without manipulations, concerning chiefly with finding, describing and, interpreting data. This design is considered to be appropriate for this study only because it accords the researcher the opportunity of sampling a large number of populations of College Library users.

The instruments for data collection are two sets of the survey questionnaire, one for the Librarian or Library Staff (where the Librarian post is vacant) and the other for the users, i.e., Students, Teachers and, Staff (10 questionnaires for users and one for the Librarian of each College).

The questionnaire sets are provided to the Librarian and, the users present in the Library. No prior intimation is given, so that, real-time, natural responses can be received. The researcher instructed the Respondents with tasks to do. 47 responses are considered to be accountable out of 50 questionnaires for users. Thus, the response percentage rate was 94%.

Data obtained were represented and analyzed in tabular format with the percentage rate.

9. Analysis of survey data and discussion

Table 1: General information about the Libraries surveyed

Name of the Library	Year of establishment	Total Collection	No. of stuff (Including Librarian)	Access to the Library
Tarakeswar Degree College Library	1986	Books: 22124 Journals: 04 CD-ROMs: 30 E- resources: N-List	05	Semi-Open
Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya Central Library	1966	Books: 31873 Journals: 20 CD-ROMs: 20 E- resources: N-List	05	Semi-Open

Name of the Library	Year of establishment	Total Collection	No. of stuff (including Librarian)	Access to the Library
Netaji Mahavidyalaya Central Library	1952	Books: 50993 Journals: 31 CD- ROMs: 87 E-Resources: N-List Rare Collections: 234 Cartographic Material: 25	06	Open
Arambagh Girls' College Library	1955	Books: 15300	03	Closed Access
AKPC Mahavidyalaya	1959	Books: 28845 Journals: 15 E-Resources: 30000+	03	Open

In the above table, it is seen that the maximum of the Libraries surveyed have the infrastructure of modern Library system though the number of staff is lower than required. Open or semi-open access is preferred access to documents mostly. 80% college libraries have subscribed to the N-List programme of UGC-INFLIBNET that proves the libraries are going towards modern study.

Table 2: Arrangement of books

Name of the Library	Arrangement of books	If helping users to understand the arrangement
Tarakeswar Degree College Library	Subject-wise	Yes
Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya Central Library	Classified	Yes
Netaji Mahavidyalaya Central Library	Classified	Yes
Arambag Girls' College Library	Subject-wise	Yes
AKPC Mahavidyalaya	Classified	Yes

Documents are arranged class number-wise in 60% College Libraries and 40% are arranged broad subject-wise where it is found to be convenient.

Table 3: Type of inner form of catalogue

Name of the Library	Author	Title	Subject-wise	Dictionary	Classified
Tarakeswar Degree College Library	×	×	√	×	×
Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya Central Library	√	×	×	×	×
Netaji Mahavidyalaya Central Library	×	×	×	×	√
Arambag Girls' College Library	×	×	×	×	×
AKPC Mahavidyalaya	×	×	×	×	√

Both the inner form of catalogue- alphabetical (author and subject-wise) and classified are carrying convenience.

Table 4: Type of outer form of catalogue

Name of the Library	Bound register	Card catalogue	Sheaf catalogue	OPAC	WebOPAC
Tarakeswar Degree College Library	×	×	×	√	×
Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya Central Library	×	√	×	√	×
Netaji Mahavidyalaya Central Library	×	×	×	√	×
Name of the Library	Bound register	Card catalogue	Sheaf catalogue	OPAC	WebOPAC
Arambag Girls' College Library	×	×	×	x	×
AKPC Mahavidyalaya	×	×	×	√	×

In the age of ICT, OPAC is more preferred outer form of catalogue in the Academic Libraries in general and in College Libraries in particular for its user-friendliness. 80% of the libraries installed Library automation software and have given access to OPAC (online public access catalogue) which is indicating towards the good environment of academic progress.

Table 5: Library automation (software) used

Name of the Library	Whether Automated	Name of the LMS	OPAC for user
Tarakeswar Degree College Library	Yes	KOHA	Yes
Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya Central Library	Yes	SOUL 2.0	Yes
Netaji Mahavidyalaya CentralLibrary	Yes	SOUL 2.0	Yes
Arambag Girls' College Library	Yes	AIDNI INFOTECH LMS	No
AKPC Mahavidyalaya	Yes	SOUL	Yes

80% of College Libraries opted for closed source LMSs and only 20% opted for open source LMSs for opensource Library management software are found to have more space for data storage and are user-friendly too.

Table 6: Availability of Internet/ E-resources

Name of the Library	Network system LAN/WAN/WiFi	Access to the Internet for users	Access to E-resources	If helping users in using Internet/E-resources
Tarakeswar Degree College Library	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya Central Library	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netaji Mahavidyalaya Central Library	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arambag Girls' College Library	No	No	No	No
AKPC Mahavidyalaya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The use of the internet and E-resources in the Libraries are getting utility day by day. The College Libraries are ready enough to face challenges to meet the information need of the users. 80% of libraries under survey are giving internet facilities to their users and utilizing ICT (Information communication technology) to a great extent.

User's responses

Table 7: Use of Library

Frequency	Student	Teacher	Staff	Total Non-Use
Daily	27.66%	14.89%	6.39%	51.06%
Twice a week	17.03%	6.38%	0%	76.59%
Once a week	14.89%	2.13%	0%	82.98%
Twice a month	2.12%	0%	0%	97.88%
Once in a month	0%	0%	4.25%	95.75%

Less than 30% of Students, Teachers and, Staff visit or use the library resources daily. And daily non-use of the library is more than 50%. Other frequencies are showing less use of the library. So, in spite of having a good collection and infrastructure the use of library is not enough.

Table 8: Finding out documents of choice

With the help of	Student	Teacher	Staff	Total non-use
Card catalogue	14.89%	4.25%	2.12%	78.74%
OPAC	8.51%	6.38%	6.38%	78.71%
Open access to stacks	27.65%	14.89%	6.38%	51.08%
Librarian/ Library staff	42.55%	8.51%	6.38%	42.56%

Finding out the document of their choice, the users depend on open access to stacks and with help of the Librarian or Library staff mostly as they found to be less aware of the usage of the tools for searching resources of the library more independently.

Table 9: Library Orientation Programme participation

Response	Student	Teacher	Staff	Total
Yes	29.79%	10.63%	8.51%	48.93%
No	31.92%	12.76%	4.25%	48.93%

Above 50% of the users did not attend the Library Orientation Programme rendered by the College Library.

Table 10: If facing problem in using

Items		Student	Teacher	Staff	Total
Catalogue	Yes	42.55%	4.25%	2.12%	48.92%
	No	14.89%	14.89%	10.63%	40.41%
Classification	Yes	42.55%	8.51%	4.25%	55.31%
	No	12.76%	10.63%	8.51%	31.90%
Stack arrangement	Yes	42.55%	6.38%	4.25%	53.18%
	No	19.14%	12.76%	8.51%	40.41%
E-resources	Yes	34.04%	6.38%	8.51%	48.93%
	No	25.53%	17.02%	4.25%	46.80%
Internet	Yes	31.91%	8.51%	4.25%	44.67%
	No	29.78%	14.89%	8.51%	53.18%
Items		**Student**	**Teacher**	**Staff**	**Total**
OPAC	Yes	38.29%	14.89%	8.51%	61.69%
	No	23.40%	8.51%	4.25%	36.16%
Reference tools	Yes	59.57%	2.12%	12.76%	74.45%
	No	2.12%	21.27%	0%	23.39%
Periodicals	Yes	46.80%	8.51%	8.51%	63.82%
	No	12.76%	14.89%	4.25%	31.90%

Most of the users (Students, Teachers and Staff) are facing problems in using Catalogue, Classification, Stack arrangement, Internet and, OPAC resulting in the ineffective use of the Library resources.

Table 11: Preferred access to documents

Access	Student	Teacher	Staff	Total
Open access	53.19%	19.14%	8.51%	80.84%
Closed access	0%	0%	0%	0%
Semi-open/Semi closed	8.51%	4.25%	4.25%	17.01%

Open access to stacks is more preferred by the users as they are facing problems in using the tools for searching the documents of their choice.

Table 12.A: Where do the Users find information about books

Places	Students	Teachers	Staff	Total
Library	59.57%	23.40%	12.76%	95.73%
Bookshops	8.51%	6.38%	0%	14.89%
Internet	8.51%	6.38%	0%	14.89%
Other	6.38%	2.12%	0%	8.50%

For the information about Books the users depend on the Library mostly. 95% of Students, Teachers and Staff depend on the Library for books.

Table 12.B: Where do the Users find information about different courses of study

Places	Students	Teachers	Staff	Total
Library	25.53%	4.25%	2.12%	31.90%
Bookshops	0%	0%	0%	0%
Internet	25.53%	12.76%	8.51%	46.80%
Other	12.76%	8.51%	0%	21.27%

Users mostly rely on the internet for having information on different courses of study. Libraries can satisfy the need of the users through their E-services.

Table 12.C: Where do the Users find information about Academic Institutions, their sessions, admission criteria, etc.

Places	Students	Teachers	Staff	Total
Library	23.40%	8.51%	2.12%	34.03%
Bookshops	0%	0%	0%	0%
Internet	21.27%	8.51%	8.51%	38.29%
Other	17.02%	8.51%	2.12%	27.65%

Information about the academic institutions and their admission criteria, etc. can be rendered by the library as a part of the Library Extension service and obviously through the Internet service or e-service.

Table 12.D: Where do the Users find information about employment

Places	Students	Teachers	Staff	Total
Library	21.27%	8.51%	8.51%	38.29%
Bookshops	0%	0%	0%	0%
Internet	36.17%	6.38%	2.12%	44.67%
Other	23.40%	8.51%	0%	31.91%

The dependency on the Internet is increasing rapidly and to meet this dependency the libraries are rendering e-services to their users.

Table 12.E: Where do the Users find Geographical information

Places	Students	Teachers	Staff	Total
Library	0%	2.12%	0%	2.12%
Bookshops	0%	2.12%	0%	2.12%
Internet	44.68%	21.27%	10.63%	76.58%
Other	21.27%	4.25%	0%	25.52%

Users are depending mostly on the internet for geographical information, i.e., places, about those places- the culture, languages, transport, etc., and Libraries through e-services can satisfy their users.

Table 12.F: Where do the Users find Medical Information

Places	Students	Teachers	Staff	Total
Library	0%	0%	0%	0%
Bookshops	0%	0%	0%	0%
Internet	34.04%	21.27%	10.63%	65.94%
Other	31.91%	4.25%	0%	36.16%

Medical information (or the community information service) can be extended to the users by the Library in the digital environment.

Table 13: Users opted topics of Orientation Training on

Training on	Student	Teacher	Staff	Total
Information literacy/ Computer literacy	29.78%	8.51%	10.63%	48.92%
Sources of information	27.65%	6.38%	4.25%	38.28%
Use of Classification and Catalogue	8.51%	6.38%	2.12%	17.01%
Use of E-resources	27.65%	12.76%	4.25%	44.66%

The users are mainly interested in having User Education through Library Orientation Programme arranged by the College Library and the varied options they have taken, clearly show the need for User Education among them.

Table 14: Suggestions from Users

Suggestions	Students	Teacher	Staff	Total
Need of Books/ Reference books/ E-resources/ Journals	34.04%	14.89%	2.12%	51.05%
Need of more Computers	6.38%	4.25%	0%	10.63%
Need of Staff	0%	4.25%	0%	4.25%
Need of Space/ Reading room	17.02%	6.38%	4.25%	27.65%
Need of Electronic and Electrical accessories	8.51%	6.38%	2.12%	17.01%
Maintenance	17.02%	6.38%	4.25%	27.65%

Users are seriously interested in the development of their Library for having better services and they have enjoyed a lot expressing their minds before the researcher.

10. Findings
- The Libraries have good collections, good management of resources, but the quantity and quality of use of the libraries are not enough.
- Though library initiation or orientation programme is necessary, most of the colleges do not have the infrastructure for it.
- If the User Orientation Programme can be organized in the college libraries, the use of the library may be ensured and increased.

11. Conclusion
Since user education is one of the major components of library service, it should be predefined and granted recognition by the regulating bodies of the academic libraries of the country. Developed countries felt user education to be introduced compulsorily as part of education along with the main course of studies. It has been proved that user education ensures the use of library resources more effectively and efficiently. In India, the same utility is also felt and some universities are working successfully. But it is not felt all over the country seamlessly as we find our state, West Bengal, is lagging in this respect largely. Practically the users of the academic libraries are mostly unaware of the effective and independent usage of the resources of their respective institutions and it has a bad effect on the education system of the state. So user education in the libraries of the academic environment should be introduced compulsorily as part of the curriculum so that the objective of education can be fulfilled.

12. Suggestions
- Librarians can experiment with the users by giving them instructions for use of library resources in their libraries for at least one year to find out if there is any gap in the use.
- User instructions may be incorporated in the library websites of colleges to help the users in the use of the resources.
- The User orientation programme should be mandatory for the college libraries to fulfill the objective of the academic institutions toward enhancing the quantity and, quality of the study, research and, development.

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